United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ President of Georgia tells Security Council that Abkhazia conflict must be resolved within framework of integral Georgian State, with provision for peaceful return of displaced persons; international peace-keepers should be deployed throughout region.

+ General Assembly authorizes Secretary-General, on exceptional basis, to commit almost $200 million to maintain five United Nations peace-keeping missions this month; asks States and international organizations to aid earthquake relief in Uganda.

+ Commission on Human Rights adopts resolutions on racial discrimination and intolerance, and on human rights situations in Cuba, Sudan and Myanmar; Chairman expresses concern about allegations of rights violations in East Timor.

+ Secretary-General, in report on good offices mission in Cyprus, urges agreement on confidence-building measures for Varosha and Nicosia Airport; says implementation would lead to political and economic gains.

+ WFP appeals for increased contributions of food and cash, saying 35 million people in 46 countries will need emergency aid this year.

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Eduard Shevardnadze, Chairman of the Parliament and Head of State of Georgia, today told the Security Council that any answer to the situation in Abkhazia must provide for the peaceful return of displaced persons, and a political solution for Abkhazia within the framework of an integral Georgian State. Addressing the Council as it considered the situation in Georgia, he said international peace-keeping forces should be deployed throughout the region.

President Shevardnadze said that elections should be held under international control and that a provisional joint administration of Abkhazia should be established under an international directorate. The Government had already granted broad rights in Abkhazia, and was prepared to grant even

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broader ones, while preserving Georgia's territorial integrity. The conflict was not an ethnic or national one, but had arisen around issues of property and power. By ending it, the Council would help to resolve similar conflicts and to prevent a chain reaction in other regions.

The representative of the Russian Federation also called on the international community to take immediate action to deal with the Abkhazia conflict, saying the Council should deploy a full-scale peace-keeping operation. Several speakers supported such an action, on the understanding that substantial progress would be made in negotiations for an overall political settlement. Such a settlement should be based on the unconditional return of displaced persons, respect for Georgia's territorial integrity and political sovereignty, and protection of ethnic groups.

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The General Assembly today authorized the Secretary-General, on an exceptional basis, to commit almost $200 million to maintain five United Nations peace-keeping and related missions this month. The Assembly took that action by adopting, without a vote, five draft decisions previously approved by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to commit up to $97 million gross for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR); almost $76 million for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II); almost $21 million for the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ); some $3 million for the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL); and more than $2 million for the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM).

Also today, the Assembly adopted a resolution asking all States and international organizations to urgently provide relief assistance to earthquake victims in Uganda. Another resolution set a $1.5-billion target for voluntary contributions to the World Food Programme (WFP) for 1995-1996, with at least one third in cash and/or services.

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The Commission on Human Rights, meeting in Geneva, today adopted a resolution to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, any form of discrimination against Blacks, Arabs and Muslims, negrophobia, anti-semitism and related intolerence. The Commission asked its Special Rapporteur to examine incidents of discrimination and intolerence, as well as government measures to overcome them, and to report to it at its fifty-first session.

The Commission also adopted resolutions on the human rights situations in individual States. It expressed regret regarding rights violations in Cuba, particularly intolerance for freedom of speech and assembly, and concern at reports of grave violations in Sudan, particularly summary executions,

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detentions without trial and torture. The Commission deplored the serious situation in Myanmar, particularly the fact that a number of political leaders there remained deprived of their liberty.

Also today, the Commission Chairman issued a statement expressing concern about continuing allegations of human rights violations in East Timor, while recognizing positive measures undertaken by the Indonesian government to improve the situation there. The Commission was concerned at the incomplete information on the number of people killed and still unaccounted for as a result of the violent incident in Dili in 1991. He called on the Indonesian authorities to ensure that the East Timorese still in custody were treated humanely and that their rights were respected.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has urged that current proximity talks between the two communities in Cyprus be concluded quickly so that a package of confidence-building measures can be implemented. The package, which has already been accepted in principle, includes the reopening of the fenced area of Varosha and of Nicosia International Airport. In a report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus dated 4 March, he said an agreement between the two sides would be the most important development on the island in two decades.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the confidence-building measures would facilitate a political settlement on the island. They would also produce important economic gains for both sides and promote the kind of relationship that should exist in a federation.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has appealed for increased contributions of food and cash for the emergency relief of millions of people at risk of starvation. WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini said yesterday that more than 24 million people in Africa would need emergency food relief this year, and that the international community would have to double its efforts there to avert large-scale suffering.

According to the WFP, some 35 million people in 46 countries will need emergency food assistance in 1994. About 80 per cent of that food will be directed to people afflicted by war and civil strife, with the rest going to those affected by drought and other natural disasters. Most of those in need are women and children and many are displaced people or refugees living in camps.

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